



**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER**

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## STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

**PRESENTED:** January 24, 2023 **REPORT:** 23-011  
**FROM:** Corporate and Community Services **FILE:** 4716  
**SUBJECT:** PARKING RATE CHANGES – MUNICIPAL STREET PARKING

### RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**That** the recommendation of the General Manager of Corporate and Community Services be endorsed.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

**That** Council endorse an increase in the hourly rates for Sundial Crescent, Visitor's Loop, Main Street, Blackcomb Way, Municipal Hall, Village Green, Conference Centre Underground/Surface and Library parking lots from \$2 to \$2.50 effective April 3, 2023;

**That** Council endorse an increase in the evening rate for the Conference Underground and Library parking lots from \$5 to \$6.25 effective April 3, 2023;

**That** Council endorse an increase in the daily rate for the Conference Underground and Library parking lots from \$20 to \$25 effective April 3, 2023;

**That** Council endorse an increase in the monthly rate for the Conference Level 4 Underground parking lot from \$70 to \$88 effective April 3, 2023;

**That** Council direct staff to propose a resolution to the Day Lot Operating Committee to endorse year-round paid parking in Day Lot 4 and 5 and if successful, direct staff to propose a further recommendation to endorse a \$25/month pass in Day Lot 4 and 5;

**That** Council direct staff to assign the incremental revenues associated with potential year-round pay parking in Day Lot 4 and 5 to further support of community transportation initiatives; and further,

**That** Council direct staff to support changes to pay parking rates with an associated communications strategy.

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

This purpose of this report is to provide Council with a brief update on the Resort Municipality of Whistler's (RMOW) paid parking program and to (1) request approval for the proposed rate increases to hourly, daily and monthly parking fees in municipal street parking lots and (2) have Council consider taking steps toward implementing year-round parking in Day Lots 4 and 5.

Information Report Administrative Report (Decision or Direction)

## DISCUSSION

### Background

The RMOW regulates public parking to balance the needs of residents, commuters and visitors. Residents and visitors utilize parking for home, work, and for commercial/recreational purposes. Currently, the RMOW manages a total of 1,542 parking stalls in Day Lots 1 through 5 (in partnership with Whistler Blackcomb) and 430 general-use municipal parking stalls in the core of Whistler Village, including Sundial Crescent, Visitor's Loop, Main Street, Blackcomb Way, Municipal Hall, Village Green, Conference Center Underground/Surface and Library parking lots (Municipal Paid Street Parking Lots).

Consistent with industry best practices for public parking, the RMOW seeks to ensure there is sufficient available parking for customers and visitors, while at the same time encouraging people, when possible, to carpool, take transit, bike and/or walk to work, rather than using single occupant vehicles. Managing the price of street parking is an important tool available to support these multiple objectives. Pricing should evolve with changes in demand, market rates, growth, inflation and improvements to alternative modes of travel.

Important benefits of a pay parking program is that it can be used to incentivize more sustainable transportation options, encourage faster parking turnover and can aid in funding preferred transportation methods. Parking rates – what people pay for parking (hourly, monthly and daily) – influence whether or not people choose to drive, where they choose to park and for how long.

The most recent parking rate change for Municipal Paid Street Parking Lots was on February 1, 2020, where a consistent rate of \$2 per hour was implemented for Sundial Crescent, Visitor's Loop, Main Street, Blackcomb Way, Municipal Hall and Village Green, which meant that the price for the first hour of parking increased from \$1 to \$2. The Library and Conference Centre were excluded from this rate update as the meters were at end of life, required replacement and could not support a change to the rate structure at that time. The Library and Conference Centre parking meters are being updated this January so they can support changes to the pricing model consistent with other meters in the municipal system.

The most recent update to the parking rates in Day Lots 1-5 was on June 15, 2022 that changed the Day Lots 1-3 daily fees to \$14 (from \$12), and daily fees in Day Lots 4 and 5 to \$8 (from \$6). The hourly rates for Lots 1-3 were also changed to \$3.00 from \$2.50.

### Analysis

The following section summarizes the Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan relationship to parking rates, parking availability, proposed new parking rates, rationale, and the associated parking revenue estimates.

#### Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan

The Big Moves and key initiatives aim to achieve the 2030 goal to reduce Whistler's community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50 per cent below 2007 levels.

Personal vehicles are Whistler's largest source of GHG emissions, accounting for 54 per cent of Whistler's total emissions in 2019. Moving beyond car-based transport to active transport and

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increased transit use is a key opportunity to reduce transport related emissions. This Big Moves includes the following most relevant policy directions:

- Big Move One target that 50% of all trips in Whistler are by transit and active transport; and
- Big Move Two target to strategically increase parking costs to discourage the use of single occupancy vehicles.

Success for these Big Moves will require a comprehensive approach that includes increasing parking rates that may assist to incentivize alternative transportation options. Additionally, increases in revenues can support a variety of Community Transportation Initiatives.

#### Parking Availability:

A best practice for effective parking management is that the optimum occupancy of a short-term facility is 85%, which means that at any given time at least 15% of parking stalls are available for motorists wishing to park. For the Day Lots, the target is 90% occupancy (10% parking stall availability), reflecting the longer parking durations and lower turn over in these lots. When parking is more convenient and predictable, customers can park without wasting time searching the lots for a place to park. The 85% occupancy level is an appropriate target for street parking and shorter-term lots in the RMOW.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the parking occupancy on weekends in winter and summer consistently exceeded the 90% target. Although the pandemic initially reduced parking demand, in summer 2021 and 2022 parking occupancy returned to pre-pandemic levels and the 90% target was exceeded on many days.

In 2022, peak occupancy in the Municipal Paid Street Parking Lots was at or below the target 85% overall (some lots reached 100%, but on average there was adequate availability and anyone looking to park in the Municipal Paid Street Parking Lots would generally have been able to find a spot without much difficulty on all but the busiest days). That said, staff expect parking demand pressures to increase in the year ahead for all municipal lots.

As noted above, peak occupancy in the Day Lots already often exceeds the 90% target:

- The occupancy in the day lots exceeded the 90% target on four of the six survey days (66%) in winter 2021-22, reaching 100% occupancy on all four days. This reflects more days above 90% than in any previous winter.
- The occupancy exceeded 90% on five of the six survey days (83%) in summer 2022, and reached 100% occupancy on three of these days. This result is similar to summer 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As visitation continues to trend upward, parking demand across the community is expected to exceed previous peak numbers and staff recommend being proactive with parking rates for the upcoming 2023 summer.

#### Parking Revenue:

The municipal parking revenue goes into several streams including:

1. The revenue from the day lot parking firstly covers all operational and capital expenditures of the lots themselves, including capital reserve contributions. Any surplus revenues go to the Community Transportation Initiative Fund (CTIF) which supports a variety of preferred

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transportation initiatives (primarily the Whistler Transit System).

2. The revenue from the parking lot under the library goes directly to offset the total library operational costs.
3. Lastly, with the exception of the library and the day lots, the revenue generated from the remainder of parking is directed into the RMOW general fund. Note that every \$475,000 of parking revenue avoids a general tax increase of 1% for municipal ratepayers.

As shown in Appendix A, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the parking revenue was impacted in 2020 and 2021. However, 2022 parking revenues have exceeded 2019 due to an increase in parking demand, the implementation of paid parking in select municipal parks, and the hourly increase in the first hour of parking from \$1 to \$2 for some street parking locations as noted above.

### Proposed Parking Rate Changes:

#### **Municipal Paid Street Parking Lots**

Staff are recommending the following changes for Council consideration:

- hourly rate for Municipal Paid Street Parking Lots from \$2 to \$2.50;
- evening rate for the Conference and Library parking lots from \$5 to \$6.25;
- daily rate for the Conference and Library parking lots from \$20 to \$25 per day;
- monthly rate for the Level 4 underground parking lot at the Conference Centre from \$70 to \$88

#### **Day Lots 1-5**

Staff are also recommending that Council consider directing municipal representatives to propose a resolution to the Day Lot Operating Committee (DLOC) to endorse year-round paid parking in Day Lot 4 and 5. Currently, Lots 4 and 5 are 'complimentary parking' from April 16 to June 14 and September 16 to December 14 annually (total: 150 complimentary days/year)

The DLOC is comprised of two senior staff members from the RMOW and two senior staff members from Whistler Blackcomb and by agreement is tasked to provide oversight to such matters as parking rates, maintenance, operations, and the budget for the Day Lots. User-pay parking in the Day Lots has been discussed by Council and strongly endorsed by the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG), a committee of Council.

Operationally, Whistler Blackcomb is responsible for the day-to-day management of the lots including snow clearing. The RMOW is responsible for pay parking equipment and operation, including the collection of revenue, and enforcement of bylaws and parking rules.

Revenues from Day Lot parking fees are reinvested into lot operations (e.g. snow clearing), maintenance, and capital investments such as EV Chargers, as well as into the CTIF. The CTIF funds programs such as:

- Secure bike parking in the Village during the summer;
- Secure bike parking at the Whistler Public Library from March through November;
- Provides transit subsidies including the High School Transit Pass Pilot Program, the Spirit Transit Pass Benefit and reduced rates for monthly transit passes;

- Provides significant funding towards transit network expansions – specifically, the Route 10-Valley Express, free summer weekend service; and
- Active transportation infrastructure.

The most recent update to the parking rates in Day Lots 1-5 was on June 15, 2022 as follows:

- Daily parking fees in Day Lots 1-3 were increased to \$14 (from \$12), and daily fees in Day Lots 4 and 5 were increased to \$8 (from \$6). The hourly rates for Lots 1-3 were also changed to \$3.00 from \$2.50.
- Complimentary parking periods for Lots 4 and 5 have remained unchanged since the initial introduction of pay parking in Lots 4 and 5 on July 1, 2017.

Additionally, staff are recommending the following changes for DLOC consideration:

- That the monthly parking rates for Day Lot 4 and 5 be reduced to \$25 (down from \$36). If this pass was purchased every month, the year round total would be \$300 annually (up 19% from the current “annual” cost of \$252 for seven months if users purchased passes for all 12 months).

### **Market Parking Rates:**

A summary of market parking rates in comparable parking lots in Whistler as well as select Vancouver lots were reviewed and considered by staff and are included in Appendix B. The proposed hourly rate of \$2.50 is well-priced compared to similar parking options in Whistler and Vancouver. Additionally, the proposed monthly rate for the Conference Centre is still below the market rate of similar products in Whistler.

### **Rationale for Potential Increases:**

Staff recommend the changes included within this report as an appropriate balance between community interest, parking availability, parking revenue, and alignment with RMOW’s Transportation Action Plan, Official Community Plan (OCP) and Climate Action Big Moves Implementation Plan.

If street parking rates are changed as proposed within this report, the expected increase in annual street parking revenue ('23 vs. '22) is expected to be ~\$400,000. These additional street parking revenues have already been forecasted and included as non-tax revenue within the 2023 budget.

The potential increase in Day Lot 4 and 5 revenues, and by extension additional revenues into the CTIF, associated with year round pay parking in Lots 4 and 5 (assuming the \$25 monthly pass price) is forecasted to be \$267,000 annually. These potential revenues are not currently included within the 2023 Five Year Financial Plan (5YFP).

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## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevant Council Authority/Previous Decisions**

Parking and Traffic Bylaw 2177, 2018 provides authority for setting parking rates in the municipality.

## **Corporate Plan**

The RMOW Corporate Plan is updated annually and articulates strategic direction for the organization. This section identifies how this report links to the plan.

### **Council Focus Areas**

Community Balance

*Effectively **balance resort and community needs** through deliberate planning, partnerships and investment*

Climate Action

*Provide leadership to **accelerate climate action and environmental performance** across the community*

Housing

*Advance strategic and innovative initiatives to enable and **deliver additional employee housing***

Pandemic Recovery

*Leadership and support for **community and tourism recovery and sustainability** – priority focuses are where recovery needs intersect with other Council focus areas*

Not Applicable

### **Corporate Goals**

Community character and mountain culture is reflected in municipal initiatives

Municipal decision-making supports the effective stewardship of natural assets and ecological function

Corporate policies and operations ensure continuous excellence in infrastructure, facility and program management

A high level of accountability, transparency and community engagement is maintained

Corporate financial health is optimized to ensure long-term community success

A vibrant local economy and safe, resilient resort community is effectively reinforced by organizational activities

### **Community Vision and Official Community Plan**

The Big Moves Climate Action Implementation Plan focuses on transportation, buildings, and waste, and articulates the key strategies Whistler will need to implement to further reduce GHG emissions to meet its targets. Personal vehicles are by far Whistler's largest source of GHG emissions, accounting for 54% of Whistler's total emissions. Moving beyond car-based transport to active transport and increased transit use is a key opportunity to reduce transport related emissions. This ongoing work aims to reduce GHG emissions, remove the barriers for the community and guests to shift to lower carbon transportation, and help to achieve Whistler's climate goals.

The RMOW parking rate changes is aligned with multiple goals, objectives and policies within the OCP.

10.1. Goal - Municipal decision-making is well-structured to achieve energy efficiency goals and GHG reduction targets.



10.1.1. Objective - Leverage community-level GHG reduction targets to track and motivate action.

10.1.1.1. Policy - Lead a community-wide effort to reduce total community GHG emissions to a level that is 33 per cent lower than 2007 levels by 2020, 80 per cent lower than 2007 levels by 2050 and 90 per cent lower than 2007 levels by 2060.

10.2. Goal - Substantially reduce GHG emissions from vehicles and transportation.

10.2.1. Objective - Treat land use as a primary determinant of transportation-based energy use.

10.2.2.2. Policy - Continue to support transportation demand management strategies that pass the infrastructure, servicing, environmental and land use opportunity costs of parking onto parking users.

### Other Relevant Policies

The [Whistler Transportation Action Plan \(2018-2028\)](#) is the long-term transportation plan for the community. Concurrent with the development of this plan, the [Short-Term Action Plan \(2017\)](#) and the [Medium-Term Action Plan \(2018-19\)](#) were developed and approved by Council. Ongoing increases to parking rates is in alignment with these plans to implement better parking strategies and move toward the community's climate objectives.

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## **BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS**

The expected increase in revenue for increase in the rates at Municipal Street Parking Lots is forecasted to be ~\$400,000 (already included in the 2023 Five Year Financial Plan (5YFP) as expected non-tax revenue). If street parking rates as recommended within in this report are not increased, staff would need to return at a future Council meeting with an amendment to the 5YFP bylaw for Council's further consideration. This bylaw amendment would seek to rebalance the 2023 operating budget in order to offset the reduced street revenue projections with a compensating reduction in reserve contributions.

The potential increase in Day Lot revenues is forecasted to be \$267,000 per year. Unlike the street parking revenues noted above, the potential increase in day lot revenues associated with year round pay parking in Lots 4 and 5 are not yet included within the 5YFP.

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## **LÍLWAT NATION & SQUAMISH NATION CONSIDERATIONS**

The RMOW is committed to working with the Lílwat People, known in their language as *L'il'wat7úl* and the Squamish People, known in their language as the *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* to: create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

There are no specific considerations to include in this report.

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Level of community engagement commitment for this project:

Inform     Consult     Involve     Collaborate     Empower

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## REFERENCES

Appendix A – Historical Parking Revenue  
Appendix B – Market Parking Rates

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## SUMMARY

This report provides Council with an update on the RMOW paid parking program and requests approval for proposed rate increases to hourly, daily and monthly parking fees in Municipal Street Parking Lots. In addition, the report seeks Council consideration of year-round paid parking in Day Lot 4 and 5.

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## SIGN-OFFS

### Written by:

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